

5. Thy Kingdom Come

When we pray: thy kingdom come, what does that signify? First of all we affirm that it is not our kingdom, it is God's kingdom. It is the Father's kingdom. It is the kingdom of our Father in heaven. Practically speaking what does it mean to pray: thy kingdom come? It means that we want to follow Jesus and do the will of the Father.

Jesus is talking about priorities. What are the priorities in our lives? Is it the kingdom of God we are concerned about? Or are we primarily concerned about the things of this world? God's kingdom is also referred to as Christ's kingdom or the Kingdom of heaven.

Jesus says: "My kingdom is not of this world (John 18:36).

. If it is not of this world, what then is this kingdom like?

In Matthew 6:33 Jesus said: **"Seek ye first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you."**

Here we see that the Kingdom of God is linked to **righteousness**. It is something we should seek.

This kingdom is referred to in many different ways in the Bible. The term *Kingdom of God* is found in all 4 Gospels. The term *Kingdom of heaven*, however, occurs only in Matthew. It is used 31 times. For example in **Matthew 3:2** we read **"Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand!"** Mark says basically the same thing but uses the term Kingdom of God instead. In Mark **1:15** we read **"The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand. Repent, and believe in the gospel."**

In Colossians 1:13 the expression *Kingdom of the Son* is used: **He has delivered us from the power of darkness and conveyed us into the kingdom of the Son of His love.** These terms are all interchangeable.

In the Lord's prayer, we pray for the Kingdom of God to come. We pray: Our Father in heaven, hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Indeed, the kingdom of God has come into our lives when we do the will of the Father. It is when we are desirous of his will, not our own agenda. This kingdom is not of this world although it is in this world. Jesus said: **"The kingdom of God does not come with observation; nor will they say, 'See here!' or 'See there!' For indeed, the kingdom of God is within you (Luke 17:20-21).**

Jesus also emphasized that his disciples were not of this world. He prayed: **"They are not of the world, just as I am not of the world" (John 17:16).** To the Father he said, **"I do not pray that You should take them out of the world, but that You should keep them from the evil one" (John 17:15).**

Like a boat that is in the water, but not of the water, so the disciples are in the world but not of the world. Likewise, God's kingdom in the world is not of the world. When we do the Father's will on earth as it is in heaven, the kingdom of heaven has come to earth.

It is not a physical Kingdom

Some people, when they think of the Kingdom of God, think of a future literal kingdom set up in Jerusalem. That is not the Bible's understanding of the Kingdom of God. The Pharisees and scribes also wanted a literal kingdom. They wanted a Messiah that would revolt against the Romans, drive them out of the land of Judah, and rule with them in Jerusalem. When Jesus did not fulfill these expectations, he was crucified. But Jesus did not come to free his people from Roman rule. He came to free them from sin. In Matthew 1:21 we read **"you shall call His name JESUS, for He will save His people from their sins."** Before Jesus enlightened the two disciples, who were on their way to Emmaus, they had similar ideas. They said to him: **the chief priests and our rulers delivered Him to be condemned to death, and crucified Him. But we were hoping that it was He who was going to redeem Israel. Indeed, besides all this, today is the third day since these things happened (Luke 24:20-21).** They had expected him to redeem Israel, not be crucified.

After the resurrection, but before Pentecost, the other disciples also still envisioned some kind of earthly kingdom. **When they had come together, they asked Him, saying, "Lord, will You at this time restore the kingdom to Israel?" (Acts 1:6)** In his answer, Jesus told them to stay in Jerusalem until they were filled with the Holy Spirit. **But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be witnesses to Me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth. (Acts 1:8)** Notice that in the Old Testament God's promise to Israel was the Promised Land, the geographical land of Israel. But in the New Testament, when Jesus talks about the Promise of the Father, he never refers to the land of Israel. In the New Testament, when Jesus talks about the promise of the Father, he refers to the promise that the Holy Spirit will come. (Luke 24:49, Acts 1:4, Acts 2:33)

Luke 24:49 Behold, I send the Promise of My Father upon you; but tarry in the city of Jerusalem until you are endued with power from on high."

Acts 1:4-5 ¶ And being assembled together with *them*, He commanded them not to depart from Jerusalem, but to wait for the Promise of the Father, "which," *He said*, "you have heard from Me; for John indeed baptized with water; but ye shall be baptized ⁴in the Holy Spirit not many days hence.

Acts 2:39 For the promise is to you and to your children, and to all who are afar off, as many as the Lord our God will call."

Acts 2:38-39 And Peter *said* unto them, Repent ye, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ unto the remission of your sins; and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. For to you is the promise, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, *even* as many as the Lord our God shall call unto him.

What does the Kingdom of God look like?

Now when He was asked by the Pharisees when the kingdom of God would come, He answered them and said, "The kingdom of God does not come with observation;

nor will they say, “See here!” or “See there!” For indeed, the kingdom of God is within you (Luke 17:20-21).

I am sure the Pharisees had no idea what Jesus was talking about. His is a spiritual kingdom. That did not fit into their concept of God’s kingdom. It was a paradigm shift they did not comprehend. Paul reiterates this concept. He says: **for the kingdom of God is not eating and drinking, but righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit. For he who serves Christ in these things is acceptable to God and approved by men. (Romans 14:17-18)** If we serve Christ in righteousness, peace and joy in the Holy Spirit, then we are in his Kingdom. That his kingdom is not a literal, but a spiritual kingdom was made very clear by Jesus’ words to Pilate. **Jesus answered, “My kingdom is not of this world. If My kingdom were of this world, My servants would fight, so that I should not be delivered to the Jews; but now My kingdom is not from here.” Pilate therefore said to Him, “Are You a king then?” ¶ Jesus answered, “You say rightly that I am a king. For this cause I was born, and for this cause I have come into the world, that I should bear witness to the truth. Everyone who is of the truth hears My voice.” (John 18: 36-37)**

If we are born again, then God **has delivered us from the power of darkness and conveyed us into the kingdom of the Son of His love, in whom we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins. (Col. 1:13-14)** Do you see how the Bible talks about two kingdoms? One is the kingdom of darkness, and the other the Kingdom of Light. If our sins have been forgiven, we are no longer in darkness, but are now in the kingdom of the Son. Peter writes: **But you are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, His own special people, that you may proclaim the praises of Him who called you out of darkness into His marvelous light (1 Peter 2:9).**

Since God’s kingdom is spiritual, his kingdom is eternal and does not pass away like the temporal kingdoms of this world. Psalm 145:13 declares: **Your kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and Your dominion endures throughout all generations.**

How does one enter the kingdom of God?

We have already seen that through the forgiveness of sins, we are made a part of God’s family, God’s church, God’s kingdom. The kingdom of God, the kingdom of heaven, consists of those in God’s family. In Ephesians 5:5 we read **For this you know, that no fornicator, unclean person, nor covetous man, who is an idolater, has any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and God.** To inherit the kingdom of God, we need to be cleansed. Our sins need to be forgiven. No unclean person has any inheritance in the kingdom of God according to Ephesians 5:5. Therefore God must cleanse us. The way he forgives and cleanses us is shown in 1 John 1:9 **If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.**

Coming to God and asking for forgiveness on account of the sacrificial blood of Jesus Christ on the cross of Calvary allows us to be born again. It is God who causes us to be born into the family of God, be born again through faith in Jesus Christ. Thus we become members of the kingdom of God. Jesus makes this clear in his discussion with Nicodemus in John chapter 3. **Jesus answered and said to him, “Most assuredly, I say**

to you, unless one is born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.” Nicodemus said to Him, “How can a man be born when he is old? Can he enter a second time into his mother’s womb and be born?” Jesus answered, “Most assuredly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God. That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. Do not marvel that I said to you, “You must be born again.’ (John 3:3-7)

And then Nicodemus answered and said to Him, “How can these things be?” (John 3:9) So Jesus explained that it is through faith in the Son of God, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have eternal life (John 3:15).

Some differences between God’s Kingdom and other Kingdoms

We have already emphasized that when we pray: Your Kingdom come, we are acknowledging that it is God’s kingdom, not ours. That means that God rules. We do not rule. It is not our opinion that is final. It is God’s Word that counts. In Acts 13:1-3 we read: **Now in the church that was at Antioch there were certain prophets and teachers: Barnabas, Simeon who was called Niger, Lucius of Cyrene, Manaen who had been brought up with Herod the tetrarch, and Saul. As they ministered to the Lord and fasted, the Holy Spirit said, “Now separate to Me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them.” Then, having fasted and prayed, and laid hands on them, they sent them away (Acts 13:1-3).**

We see here that the Holy Spirit called Barnabas and Saul into his work. People in God’s kingdom are led by God’s Spirit. It is the Spirit of God who administers the gifts and empowers the people of God (1 Corinthians 12:1-3). When the disciples reached decisions, they were careful to find out the mind of God. In Acts 15:28 we read: **For it seemed good to the Holy Spirit, and to us, to lay upon you no greater burden than these necessary things.** This was in reference to a letter being sent out to the Gentile Christians. It was not their opinion, but God’s will that the apostles were eager to discern.

David says: **I will extol You, my God, O King; And I will bless Your name forever and ever. Your kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and Your dominion endures throughout all generations. (Psalm 145:1 & 13)** This shows us that the Kingdom of God has a King. It is the Lord himself. We are not talking about a Democracy but a Theocracy. It is not the majority that rules but God. The majority does not decide what sin is and what is not sin. It is God who defines sin. It is not the pastor or the elders that decide who is a member of the church, or the kingdom of God, rather it is God who adds to his kingdom (Acts 2:45). We do not debate whether or not to be baptized, whether we should administer the Lord’s supper, or to participate in the ordinance of Foot Washing. It is God’s command in his Word that is our guideline. When people choose and make decisions that are not in accordance with the commands of our God and King, then it is no longer the Kingdom of God we are talking about but human rule. It is no longer God’s church or God’s Kingdom that is being manifested. In order to pray Your Kingdom come, it must also include Your Will be done. Or as Jesus said: **not My will, but Yours, be done (Luke 22:42).** In the Kingdom of God we do not rule over others (1 Peter 5:1-3). We are all brothers and sisters. We do not rule over others but over sin. Paul writes: **Therefore do not let sin reign in your mortal body, that you should obey it in its**

lusts. And do not present your members as instruments of unrighteousness to sin, but present yourselves to God as being alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness to God. For sin shall not have dominion over you, for you are not under law but under grace (Romans 6:12-14). If that is not the case in your life, then the Kingdom of God has not yet fully come to you. Do not just pray: your kingdom come, but act upon it. Claim God's victory for your life. Be a part of his kingdom. **The voice of rejoicing and salvation is in the tents of the righteous (Psalm 118:15).**

Questions

1. Since it is God's kingdom, what does that imply?
2. How did Jesus not fulfill the expectations of the Pharisees regarding the Kingdom of God?
3. What does the Kingdom of God look like?
4. When Jesus talks about the promise of the Father, what does he mean?
5. What is another word for the Kingdom of God?
6. How does one enter the kingdom of God?
7. What does it mean to be born again?
8. Since the Kingdom of God is not a democracy, what is it?
9. What does it mean to be a theocracy?
10. How is ruling in the Kingdom of God manifested?